Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/23/2021 9:23:33 PM
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Comments: I enthusiastically support the Forest Service's proposed prescribed fire operations for the Sawtooth National Forest. As a Wood River Valley homeowner, I understand why some are opposed: Fire is ultimately unpredictable, and prescribed fire brings risk and inconvenience of its own. But as a former federal employee with fourteen years of experience in wildland fire management throughout the mountainous West, I know firsthand that the risks of inaction are far greater, leading, inevitably, to large-scale catastrophic fire. Mechanical fuel reduction also has its place, and I would urge the Sawtooth National Forest staff to pursue this option as well. But the key to safe and sustainable fire ecology is heterogeneity (diverse canopy heights and fuel types within a given space)-and prescribed fire is ultimately the most effective means of achieving this state. My hope, in fact, is that prescribed-fire use will be extended more broadly throughout the forest and onto adjoining lands managed by other agencies. In the East Fork vicinity, for instance, it's not too uncommon to see ignitions (human-caused or natural) in the Spring, just as the snow is bearing off. These fires are always quickly suppressed, due to their proximity to houses (including my own). In reality, though, these early season fires could often do a lot to reduce the threat of catastrophic mid-summer events, with little or no threat to nearby resources. It would be great to see the state and the B.L.M. collaborating with the U.S.F.S. to let some of these fires run (within established parameters), and it would be great to see prescribed fire and mechanical reduction employed in the southern portions of the Sawtooth National Forest's Ketchum District.